

# A PERSONAL QUEST

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# PREFACE

The following are my personal epistemological musings arising from a contemplation of *The Gospels*, especially *The Gospel of John* (The New Testament of the Bible); Rudolf Steiner's, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity [Freedom]* (Poppelbaum version, 1949, The Rudolf Steiner Publishing Co., London); and most initially from Carl Unger's, *Principles Of Spiritual Science* (The Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, New York, 1976).

Gerald Fluhrer



*This is the origin point for all thought, the concept of the concept—the I*

# I

## FIRST THOUGHTS

*Thought of thought; is this not the same as seeing thought?*

Thinking establishes subject and object, I and world. Yet, I produce thought.

I think; in so declaring, I think about the fact that I think think about thinking thought of thought; an activity that is isolated, independent, individually recognized, self-sustaining, and undeniably real arises in me.

Then thinking about thinking is to abide in the essential clarity of the I. I produce thought and thereby establish that I am an origin point for thinking, even though this fact came not to light until thinking reflected upon itself.

In analyzing thinking thinking about thinking I come upon the concept as the primary element in all thought.

*What does a concept do?* The concept gives meaning to an otherwise meaningless jumble of perceptual content. I give direction to the concept, for without my initiating thinking in a purposive manner the concept would have no meaning or accessibility for me. This is the origin point for all thought, the *concept of the concept* the I.

The I existed within the not-I veiled in darkness. The not-I (the Logos) reflected upon Itself via sensory perception, stimulating nerve impulses, awakening the inner life of Man, eventually revealing Itself as expressions of thought. “The light shone into the

darkness but the darkness comprehended it not.” The light became thought but not until thought reflected upon itself was the I revealed. The Christ makes possible that the I can awaken to its divine origin, by seeing the I in the world, from which in the beginning, the I in darkness began — ego meets Ego.

*What arises next?* In essence, the ego is the same as the Ego — a Christ child — a spiritual babe growing into itself by means of itself.

*Is this not the Spirit Self?* I see the Christ in the world. I experience this World I as the I working in me. I thereby awaken further to the Christ and what I will become.







*We come upon the pure ego experientially by entering right into the process of abstraction itself*

## II

What is it to say that the **concept of the concept** is the pure ego?

It lies in the process itself that we experience the living being. We cannot speak of the ego in the usual abstract fashion, like when we look upon a tree and then study more closely the seed/cone, abstracting out of the whole a particular object for study. No, we come upon the pure ego experientially by entering right into the process of abstraction itself.

We have naturally come upon the realization that in thought we have the living essence/field in which the ego discovers itself. Thought considers itself in the activity of recognizing its necessary function in coming to know anything. As it comes to know itself, in the process of discovering itself one's own being emerges. Thought is a reality that can directly perceive itself, and then from out of thought emerges the one who thinks. Thought itself is the field from out of which we perceive the ego emerge. Then the question arises, "what in thinking, what place, or origin point in thinking, does the ego find its conception?" A play on words or the Word playing itself out through the essential element of thought the concept.

The concept as the basic element in thought points to an ever purer concept. Something from out of which all reality initially arose. This Being finds its shadowed representative in our present grasp of thinking this shadowed form allows us to experience the fact that we produce thought and from this discover the very origin of our own being. The *concept of the concept* speaks of the beginning and the end of our inquiry. We see ourselves as created and yet also as creative potential. We are graced with being and actively produce ourselves in the very act of making this discovery. Our

purity is ever so fleeting. We are unable to hold it fast and fix it. Ever anew do we bring ourselves to active being as we go in search of that reality we know must exist, that which underlies everything, and *is* even before the desire arises to know from whence we have come and from whence we find our own being.









*From out of the whole, through a reflective process, where reality meets itself face-to-face and thereby awakens to a higher reality, does the indivisible being gradually arise*

### III

*What of this paradox, that we create ourselves and yet have being given us of the Word of God?*

From out of the whole, through a reflective process, where reality meets itself face-to-face and thereby awakens to a higher reality, does the indivisible being gradually arise. This being can not know herself and be a freely determined individual, if all knowing is not directly worked out and earned through the productive thought process of the one who would come to herself.

All things have their origin in the Word. It is the spirit essence passing through the evolutionary process. A sacrificial reality growing ever closer to that possible moment where self awareness first comes to light. It is truly an individual achievement to discover the Self from which one originally arose. The active doing is one's own, the Man in all his parts, however, rightly belongs to the whole. The possibility of free creative activity is what makes the returned being of a higher evolutionary order. What was originally given is freely returned, having been made new.

This is told of in the Gospels where the master speaks of those with their given talents and how they who properly invest their talents will bring forth increase pleasing to their lord (Matt. 25:14-30).



*The newly born I finds that initial reality from which all has come to be*

## IV

What can be said regarding the Rosicrucian tenet:

**In pure thought thou findest the Self which can maintain itself**

(p. 11, Principles of Spiritual Science)

In the activity of thinking about thinking we have a force that is capable of discovering that essential origin point from out of which all conception finds its beginning and end.

This activity puts a light upon the subject, if you will. I produce the activity that eventually brings me back to that which has always been, that from out of which the thought activity initially arose.

There was a beginning, from out of which all becoming had its origin – a god – his word. The Word is expressive of that cosmic evolutionary process whereby sensory capacity arises, reflecting upon itself – the world being – and thereby allowing that which always lay within to find the stimulation necessary to reveal itself in living thought forms, eventually manifesting itself to itself again as the individual's consciously spoken word.

The newly born I finds that initial reality from which all has come to be. Within itself is the world whole. When I touch my creator I create anew, producing out of pure spiritual activity that from which all are born. Now I consciously participate in this Self reflective process, recognizing in the world that originally all wise being showing Itself through my productive activity. My actions begin to harmonize with that Self that reveals Itself to me, from out all that I perceive, in that It initially arises as conscious reality within me.

I and World. From out of the World came I; from out of the I is the World being found. I look to my essential origin and find the World; I look to the World and discover my Self – my I that is perpetually capable of maintaining itself.

*It was in the world and the world came into being through it but the world knew it not* (Rudolf Steiner's English translation of John 1:10); and yet from out of the world, from out of the life in the world, has arisen a living light that is capable of coming upon itself, as a newly cognizant creative potential, a self initiating being.

That which the Christ implanted within the human being has arisen to its own beginning. Now the self that has become itself may likewise offer to the world, from which it was born, new life.

Such is the Ideal I find living within me.







*When we act freely, out of ourselves, do we not offer ourselves up to the world whole?*

# V

What is Christ's function?

Is there possibility before being? Without the gods would anything exist whereby a new creative impulse could arise? Without the god who sacrifices himself, entering human destiny, human potential, as the essence of that potential, is there any possibility for free individual initiative? Does this declare that freedom is a ruse, or is it not clear that our free possibility arises from out of the being who offers herself up that freedom may exist within humanity; when we act freely, out of ourselves, do we not offer ourselves up to the world whole?

Life, arising out of the same, who in the beginning was with God. Man shall work out his own salvation through the divine sacrifice that makes possible that all humans might become Man. Let the Spirit in Man be revealed. Have confidence in your origin, in yourself.





*Life is full of contradiction Death stands as the most dramatic and the most obviously noticeable*

# VI

## THE FOLLOWING IS DERIVED FROM THE THIRD ESSAY OF CARL UNGER'S

### *PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL SCIENCE*

Life is full of contradiction. Death stands as the most dramatic and the most obviously noticeable. And yet typically in our life of thought we say that contradiction cannot abide in order for truth to be known. Contradictory thought is perceived as being false. But such a demand obviously puts us outside the reality of life and makes it impossible for us to come and know intimately the truth for what it is; we are left cast out with only the *principle of contradiction* as our basis in certainty, that is, no judgement and its opposite can at the same time be true. If A is B is true, then A is not-B cannot likewise be true; or if A is not-B is true, then A is B cannot be true.

Of the three judgments: A is B, A is not-B, A is both B and not-B; the third is typically regarded as a contradiction and is deemed impossible and always false. But if we hold that the third judgement is true — the *principle of contradiction* — then this brings us to say that contradiction lives within the truth. And so we find the nature of the truth to be, for by holding to such a principle, that A cannot at the same time be both B and not-B, we find ourselves within contradiction itself when considering life! For life is death, even as death is life, and since such a declaration truly expresses our experience in this world, then we must deny any validity to this world if we are to hold that no contradictory thought may exist in us in order to rightly know the world. But rather than deny that we have no actual access to the reality of this world — because it is



full of contradiction, nay is based in contradiction – let us spend some time looking at contradiction itself to see how we might rightly proceed in coming to know life that is free of the *principle of contradiction*.



The *principle of contradiction*, A cannot at the same time be both B and not-B, leaves us with two possibilities in our quest for truth: either A is B, or A is not-B. In the process of coming to know the truth of the *principle of contradiction* it becomes quite clear that proceeding by means of the judgement, A is not-B, is too impractical. An infinite amount of time would be necessary in order to exclude, or negate all that A is not, in order to be left with A. It is far more significant that we find we are able to declare that A is B directly by means of a “sufficient reason;” for here we find in this one

declaration, in the *principle of identity*,\* the essence for all logical proceeding; the other declaration does not need to exist, for in A is B, all not-B is already excluded and any declaration to that effect unnecessary. Then the approach toward the truth is intimately linked with our searching for our union with the whole – for my unique identity. I am the great exception from the *principle of contradiction* in that I am able to penetrate the nature of a thing till I come upon its essence, to come upon the thing itself interpenetrating its-self with myself, becoming one with it in my understanding, communing with nature, or when I communicate with another.

So if we desire to come to know the truth we must begin by proceeding from this most essential of all principles, namely *identity* (A is A), for in *identity* we find ourselves free from the *principle of contradiction*. Then I am the World, and the World is my Self, becomes the most basic expression of my identity or the natural conclusion of the *principle of contradiction* (A cannot simultaneously be both B and not-B) carried out to its truth seeking end.

We discover the greater working in the world as we attempt to find firm ground in knowing the self.

\* The earliest use of the law [identity] appears to occur in Plato's dialogue Theaetetus, where Socrates attempts to establish that what we call "sounds" and "colors" are two different classes of thing.

Socrates: How about sounds and colors: in the first place you would admit that they both exist?

Theaetetus: Yes.

Socrates: And that either of them is **different from the other, and the same with itself**?

Theaetetus: Certainly.

Socrates: And that both are two and each of them one?

Theaetetus: Yes.



*Without the living reality of thought the world would have no orientation or meaning*

## VII

Our sense perceptions are not the whole reality; something essential is missing that bears within itself the completion for the whole, from out of which perceptions have been born. Pure perception is color, sound, smell, tactile-ness, ideas and memories, passions and feelings, etc., a hodgepodge of perceptions all blended into one; a blindness and deafness filled with light and sound. Without the living reality of thought the world would have no orientation or meaning. Thought completes reality. What is amazing about thinking is its spirituality, its universal access to all thinking beings. What lives in thinking can exist in and of itself, as in mathematics and logic. It can eventually discover itself and therein find its origin in the *concept of the concept*, from out of which all potential thought initially arises. The Logos child comes to itself; what was in the beginning born out of the word has evolved through thought capacity to the point of its own self determining. The spirit germ touches the eternal and becomes an eternally creative potential. This new being produces out of itself the possible world.

*But what is the world?*

Sense perception conveys an aspect of reality that cannot be denied as real and must be united with that reality that makes it comprehensible to the human being, that is, thinking. From this it is clear that what underlies sense perceptible reality is not imperceptible matter but thought (spirit). Pure perception – pure thought, two aspects of the same Being. For the human being, the two must be in harmony with one another for true reality to be present and cognized. Then pure perception is an aspect of spirit reality, it actually has no material basis. The closer one studies matter the more one finds that matter itself has no self-sustaining basis, passing out, as it were, into the “nothingness” of its spiritual origins.

The perceived light shines into the darkness, which comprehends not the light, but the light works on, eventually evolving itself into the inner being of man; the Eye of God leads to the I of man, the light which becomes thought.

The I of man is now a co-creating participant in this returning round of evolution. That which is behind the sense perceptible — the Word — the Life — the Light — and has resulted in the awakened self, likewise would pour through that self, Itself, back into the sense perceptible. The clear creative thought of the individual can now be recognized as potential possibility within the world. The higher self of the individual, from out of the creative origin of all, can now reveal itself in the world and begin to evolve into the world a new state of being. The light sends forth itself through the I of man into that which upholds the world, that the world be made new. The individual is the catalyst for change: the great turning, that which has been evolved now in turn evolves what evolved it. From out of the individual's activity, catalyzing potential, freely offered possibility, the new world can be prepared.

It is now that time to pour our love into the world that she become fully nurtured, having already given so much of herself in order that this possibility may arise.







## VIII

The flames warm the face of the soul in the grove  
While the expansive silence speaks clearly of his time  
And the man beholds his destiny through the swaying trees  
That star shines bright then passes again out of sight

The cold draws him in  
And in the darkness he struggles with thought  
That thought of thought  
Himself a light

All around the world there is a churning  
This kind of conception cannot go undisturbed  
The soul is exposed from within  
Falling upon itself again and again in ancient sin

A blue wind stirs the pines to gesturing nods of understanding  
As the abyss within continues its infernal dissolving  
Hopeful is this patient writhing while hopelessness demands its day  
A light plays brightly between the needles of the pines  
Wisdom is smiling acknowledging this struggle for life

The light disturbs the comforting lie  
For being demands to be recognized  
The winds cause the flames to run and hide  
While the embers pulse the rhythm of a courageous heart

The trees stand tall declaring from their roots what Man can be  
Yet all who stand as I must endure the passing lie  
And in the calm find that place in which the flames may once again arise

Take care this new child  
Heaven awaits it firmly taking root

Dread not the debilitating truth for it is but the enduring of enraged fear







*The light of the sun develops an organ, the eye, that reveals its manifestation*

## IX

The sense perceptible world is revealed through a developed organ. The organ is formed from out of the reality that it senses. Therefore the light of the sun develops an organ, the eye, that reveals its manifestation. It is important that we realize the significance that out of a whole aspect of reality – light – and its influence upon the world, an abstraction of itself evolves – the eye. Now a mirror exists in the world capable of reflecting the reality of light upon itself.

What happens when one sees their reflection? A higher stage of cognition results, an awareness of self not otherwise acknowledged and requiring a process of development, a point of ripeness, before this awareness properly arises. Both parties are affected. The reflector and the one reflected. As organs of perception develop within sentient beings, a new higher stage of consciousness arises for them, an inner being, or soul life emerges. The originating world being likewise sees its offspring coming to greater awareness, and also is brought forward, perhaps somewhat analogously to that of a parent being brought to fulfillment in the coming to maturity of the child. This growing awareness in the child comes to a decisive point, where in a creative process the consciousness (through the activity of consciousness – thought) awakens to itself as that which brings forth consciousness of self and yet only now, through the activity of thought, did it come upon itself!

A self creative act.

It could be objected that what is realized was always present. But the realizer is a new being, a co-joiner in conscious being. The originator (Father) was certainly already present but the son had no active part in Him until he actively brought himself to that point of self realization. This beginning is a point of conception from which the new being must evolve. In its newly becoming, it beseechingly pours forth through itself light that was graciously given from the beginning, enlightening the soul. This light, the Christ light, in essence is the same as that which came from the sun, but now it shines from the opposite direction (from the future verses the past), from within outward, filling the soul. New eyes can now evolve by which the spirit world can become

objectively perceived. Likewise, the new being finds that his evolving soul life affects the world in such a manner that the world approaches him, revealing this new evolving higher life. For the individual this can result initially in a chaotic world situation. The new being must place himself in the world, the space must be stirred to provide for the new that is born out of the old, from out its own unique point of conception.

First, the yet unreflected life within the newly conceived being emerges. Then, gradually, throughout the world the Higher Self (the reflected being in the world of the newly conceived child of God) shows Itself in such a way that the awakened one can see its new destiny clearly forming out of the chaotic mists of the reformed world condition, which initially was brought on by the free self creative act of the individual. As the world process evolved the possibility of the individual, so likewise, now through the individual is the world evolved.

Patience is necessary in order to forge ahead in a manner harmonious with the new state of being. If one panics in the chaos of the new condition, one finds herself in a swirl of worldly circumstances, a milieu of karmic chaos, which can result in this new-one being unable to develop beyond the conception point to the more embryonic stages.

Let an inner calm be your home for creative activity. Seek first your own spirit working, and though this may seemingly have no relation to outward conditions, yet will this be the seed from which new outward circumstances grow. You are not alone, although it is true that you must pass through this chaotic portal of becoming alone.









And the light shone into the darkness but the darkness comprehended it not

# X

## THE LOGOS MADE FLESH

The Gospel of John opens with (Rudolf Steiner's version): *In the beginning was the Word [the Logos] and the Word was with God and the Word was a God. The same was in the beginning with God.*

**Let us look more closely at this profound declaration.**

What you are reading does not sound forth as when two are openly discussing some matter, and yet, there is a sounding that takes place within you as you read these words. That sound is the inner spoken word of what you see written before you. The sound arises out of a being, myself as author, reverberating within you. Within this sounding we discover life, and that this life is the light of our being. The Word is able to find expression through what is dead, or lifeless – the written word. The Word is then greater than what is physically perceivable: *All things came into being through It and save through It was not anything made that was made. In It was life and life was the light of men.*

**What of this light that is spoken of?**

We see that the Word proceeds from out of ourselves, our life; it may not yet be clear that our life proceeds from out of the Word, but certainly our living words would have no meaning if we did not give meaning to them.

**What faculty of ours enables us to bring this meaning of the Logos to light?**

Speaking evolutionarily: first, there is the lifeless physical form, then as in the plants, life overcomes death but has as of yet no consciousness as the freely mobile animals do. This consciousness – as in awakening from unconscious sleep – can certainly be

regarded as a light filled condition, however, as the Gospel of John points out, the animals and most of mankind, are unaware of this light: *And the light shone into the darkness but the darkness comprehended it not.* The use of the term light can be illustrated by how some animals when standing before a mirror will not recognize themselves; they do not see or intuitively apprehend themselves.





**Then what evolutionarily are we moving toward; what is the light and what will it reveal?**

Another way of approaching the light is by asking ourselves, what faculty brings to light the fact that we are conscious? From present humanity's perspective there would exist no consciousness without our faculty of thinking. Thought is light. We refer to this when we speak of an idea suddenly occurring to us as a light bulb being turned on. But more directly we can apprehend thought as light when we bring to mind the fact that by means of thought we see what some perceived thing means. Without thought no perceived thing would mean anything to us, it would never arise as a given thing in our consciousness. Likewise, thought is able to perceive itself. We can think of a given concept, let us say, *triangle* and a picture may very well come to mind; and then again we can further penetrate into this picture and discover its lawful content by defining it precisely, as in, *three non-linear points determine a triangle*. Thought then is both the object perceived as well as that which fills the object with meaningful content. From out of thought arise both the form and the content, the object and the subject, the world and the I. But, as Carl Unger points out, we can go further into this thought (which was originally presented by Rudolf Steiner in the first half of his work, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*).

First let us quickly review. We know that life can express itself through the written word because we are alive and are the ones giving life to them. In order to bring this life within us to conscious awareness we speak of the light filling nature of thought.

**What more can we directly declare regarding thought itself?**

We can see in thought a reality that is self-perpetuating and independent of all that is other than it. Although it may appear that without a brain there could be no thought, thought reveals quite clearly that only thought – not brain matter – may enter into the conceptual realm. This realm is a reality that thought weaves and penetrates discoveringly into; the concept triangle exists whether or not our brain is capable of healthy functioning. What greater declaration of our own reality is there than

Descartes, “I think, therefore I am”? I myself produce a self existent reality and therefore I too share in what is reality, and I know directly that this is the truth.

**But what more can we say of this reality, this which one must come to know before one can come to explore and know anything else that might likewise be able to claim itself as reality?**

Thought is both content and form. We come to know the law of thought by means of logic. Logic itself proceeds by way of concepts that give meaning, or the content for the validly acknowledged forms of logic. Although concepts may appear to be a part within logic, they are also of themselves filled with all that logic is, namely both form and content. The concept triangle may assume many possible forms, and all conceivable forms for triangle are yet filled with the same content or meaning. Likewise, a concept can be a whole idea, such as World Economy, or as minuscule as the concept--point. But for thought to be a living reality it must grow, or proceed organically from one thought to the next, or from one concept to the next. Then what lives in thought must contain the potential for all possible forms that thought might assume and give the potential creative impulse for whatever possible content or meaning thought might have had or will in the future have. Thought must arise out of the origin Carl Unger enunciated as the *concept of the concept*. But what is this origin point for all potential form and content of thought but the intuitively cognized I !

I think. I produce thought. I am the author of my own words. I know the meaning of that which I speak and I form my words so that my meaning can and will be conveyed into the world.

**But let us again review how it is that we got here, so that we do not become egotistically lost!**

First we acknowledged that in our words there is life, we are sentient beings speaking words. We then acknowledged that the meaning of words comes to light by way of thought. Thought of thought is seen as a self existent reality and I share in that

reality because I think. I therefore become conscious of myself as a conscious sentient being. The light of thought enlightens my living consciousness. But I go further in my quest. I come to the intuitive experiential state of the *concept of the concept*, the point of self conception. For I have realized myself as a creative being, from out of whom proceeds the life and light of all potential form and content; I am a freely co-creating, self-initiating being, who has come to himself, to that, from out of which in the beginning all that was made was made, and from out of which life and light evolved back upon itself as a self conscious individuality standing upon the original eternal rock of being, as in: *Upon this rock I shall build my church* (Matthew 16:13-20).

Salvation has come by means of the Word made flesh. But this salvation, to be true, must arise out of my own self conception. I must work out my own salvation by means of that which lives within me. Until I have intuitively come upon my own self conception the best I can declare regarding myself is that I feel that I am, but I have as of yet not intuitively cognized that fact. By so doing, I am born anew into the world as a knower who now enters actively and creatively into the process of becoming, of fulfilling the ancient command: *Man, Know Thyself!*



*Reality is apprehended in the fully awake consciousness through perception, and its necessary counterpart, thought*



# XI

Reality is apprehended in the fully awake consciousness through perception, and its necessary counterpart, thought. Yet thought has the unique characteristic of being itself a reality that is both percept and concept. The origin of thought is the fount of this reality and can be discovered only by means of intuition. In the *concept of the concept* the producer of thought comes upon himself as that which is the creative potential for all possible form and meaning thought might assume. The thinker experiences that he comes upon the origin of himself, that which precedes his conscious self conception. This actively intuitive grasping of Self is the discovery of the microcosm arising from out of the macrocosm; the very essence of being is found within the indwelling Christ. The Self is Christ discovered through the spiritual activity of the individual in the process of coming to recognize himself as man becoming Man. To know herself in the world, to find that self in the world, is the call heard resounding from out of that which the world evolved from itself, until thought activity conceived its own being.

Through thought I have come to the universal Self. I will offer up myself through active attention to that from which thought tore itself from the perceived reality. From out of the world whole the body is drawn up as an organ of sense. This Eye of God reflects truly the sun, whose light is one with the pure thought that recognizes itself in the light. The evolved shines back upon itself. The sun meets the son in loving light and neither can remain unchanged. As the son fills with the light of knowing he offers to the world new creative expression for that which lives now in the world. The evolved, through recognizing that same original sun-being, heralds the day of reunion for earth and sun by rightly assuming his proper place as keeper of the earth.

